RECORD PRIVATIZATION DEAL IN LITHUANIA. The Kaunas-based company Minta and 18 individuals won in a contest the right to purchase the Kedainiai Chemical Factory, the largest producer of mineral phosphorus fertilizers in the Baltic States. They will pay 135 million litai ($33.75 million)--26.5 million litai more than the initial asking price--for 69.7% of the factory's shares. The 18 unnamed individuals were described as businessmen who previously were engaged in the nonferrous metals trade. The factory is the most expensive enterprise to be privatized thus far in Lithuania. The new owners estimate that necessary modernization will cost $50-60 million. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

YELTSIN PONDERS PEACE IN NEW YEAR ADDRESS. Late on 31 December Russian President Boris Yeltsin delivered his televised New Year's address to the nation, emphasizing prospects for peace in 1995. While mentioning Chechnya only once by name, it was clear that the situation in the war-torn region and conflict in general were paramount for Yeltsin, as he directed "greetings to those . . . who are maintaining the security of our country, defending its borders." Yeltsin also directed special remarks to Russians living abroad, "in the countries of the CIS and the Baltic region," saying that Moscow government remained firmly committed to "do everything possible to defend (their) legal rights and interests." -- Stan Markotich, OMRI, Inc.

LATVIA PROTESTS TO MOSCOW. On 3 January, Latvian Foreign Ministry State Secretary Maris Riekstins sent a note to Russian ambassador Aleksandr Rannikh protesting that Russian military personnel had not left Latvia on schedule. The troops were to have left Latvia by the end of August, but because of the lack of housing in Russia the Latvian authorities had allowed discharged troops and their families to remain until the end of 1994. Riekstins's note said that Russian soldiers remained in the country and asked for a list of them. Latvian officials have rejected Russia's claim that only 1,115 soldiers are involved, saying that there are many more. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

That's all the news we have from abroad, so we'll now move on to items of interest here in Northeast Ohio...